

**Department of Natural Resources  
Box 7924  
Madison, Wisconsin 53707**

**WISCONSIN BAIT DEALER REGULATIONS**

**GENERAL**

It shall be unlawful for any person, except licensed bait dealers to have in possession or under control more than 600 minnows at any time. **A licensed bait dealer must be present while employees are collecting bait and the licensed bait dealer must have their license available for inspection.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to take, gather or collect (or attempt to do so) for the use or sale as bait by himself or others any of the larvae or nymphs of aquatic insects in or from any stream or spring hole tributary thereto inhabited by trout.

**INLAND WATERS**

Unless a permit for nonstandard minnow gear has been issued, only the following gear may be used for the taking of minnows for bait:

**Minnow Seines:** Minnow seines may not exceed 35 feet in length and shall contain mesh not to exceed one-half inch stretch measure.

**Minnow Dip Nets:** Minnow dip nets shall be defined as follows: A piece of netting suspended from a round or square frame not to exceed 8 feet in diameter or 8 feet square.

**Minnow Traps:** Minnow traps shall be of a length not greater than 24 inches and of a width not greater than 16 inches square or in diameter with an opening in the throat of the trap not larger than 1 1/2 inches in diameter. The traps shall have securely attached to them a label or tag clearly bearing in the English language the name and address of the operator. All minnow traps shall be raised and the minnows removed from them at least once in every 48 hours from all waters, except department designated trout waters as indicated in department publications or under s. NR 1.02(7). On designated trout waters, traps shall be raised and emptied every 24 hours during the open season for trout on the water, and during closed season on such water, as required in the department permit authorizing placement of the trap.

**Trout Streams:** Unless a permit has been issued by the department, no person may use minnow seines or minnow dip nets of any type or description in inland streams or tributary spring holes inhabited by trout. Licensed bait dealers may use no more than a total of 20 minnow traps when removing minnows from one or more trout streams during the open season for trout, unless a permit has been issued. Persons not possessing a bait dealer's license may use no more than a total of 3 minnow traps to remove or collect minnows from a trout stream. . During the closed trout season, minnows may not be removed from any designated trout stream except by licensed bait dealers as authorized by permit.

## **OUTLYING WATERS AND TRIBUTARIES**

### **LAKE SUPERIOR**

#### **Smelt**

Dip Nets: Not exceeding 8 feet in diameter or 8 feet square, may be used only from April 1 to May 25 for taking smelt in Lake Superior and all streams flowing into Lake Superior in Bayfield, Ashland, Iron counties and the Brule River in Douglas County from a point beginning at their mouths and extending inland for a distance of one-half mile measured in a straight line. In Douglas County smelt may also be taken on Bear creek, Bluff creek, Nemadji River, the St. Louis River and the other non-trout streams. In the waters of Ashland County, smelt may also be taken from streams not inhabited by trout, or on streams where active sea lamprey control structures are located.

Seines: Not more than 75 feet in length and not more than 6 feet in depth may be used from April 1 to May 25 for taking smelt in Lake Superior, St. Louis Bay, Superior Bay, Allouez Bay and from the mouth of the St. Louis River upstream to the north 28th St. landing in Douglas County.

For harvesting smelt, no fishing license is required for Wisconsin residents, however non-residents must possess a valid Wisconsin non-resident fishing license.

#### **Minnnows**

No open season. Minnows may not be taken by nets in Lake Superior, its bays or tributaries.

#### **Suckers**

**Suckers (rough fish) may be taken by hook and line, by hand, spearing**

### **LAKE MICHIGAN**

#### **Smelt**

Dip Nets: Not exceeding 8 feet in diameter or 8 feet square may be used for taking smelt in Lake Michigan and all streams and rivers flowing into Lake Michigan including the northern and southern parts of Green Bay. Smelt may be taken from such streams beginning at the bay or lake and extending upstream to a point 500 feet below the first dam or a distance of 5 miles straight inland from the stream mouth where no dam is located within 5 miles of the mouth.

Seines: Not more than 75 feet in length and not more than 6 feet in depth may be used from April 1 to May 25 for taking smelt and suckers in Lake Michigan and Green Bay and that portion of the Fox river in Brown County upstream from 1,500 feet below the dam in the city of DePere. Seines may not be used at any time to take smelt from any tributary stream or ditch.

For harvesting smelt, no fishing license is required for Wisconsin residents, however non-residents must possess a valid Wisconsin non-resident fishing license.

## **Minnows**

No open season for minnows, except suckers. Minnows may not be taken by traps, nets or minnow traps, or seines in Lake Michigan or Green Bay or their bays. Minnows, except suckers, may not be taken by nets, minnow traps or seines in Lake Michigan tributary streams or Green Bay tributary streams and ditches.

## **Suckers**

Dip nets not exceeding 8 feet in diameter or 8 feet square may be used at any time in Lake Michigan and Green Bay to take suckers and all streams and rivers flowing into Lake Michigan including the northern and southern parts of Green Bay. Suckers may be taken from such streams beginning at the bay or lake and extending upstream to a point 500 feet below the first dam or a distance of 5 miles straight inland from the stream mouth where no dam is located within 5 miles of the mouth.

Seines: Seines can not exceed 75 feet in length and not more than 6 feet in depth and may be used from April 1 to May 25 for taking smelt and suckers in Lake Michigan and Green Bay and that portion of the Fox river in Brown County upstream from 1,500 feet below the dam in the city of DePere. Seines may not be used at any time to take suckers from any tributary stream or ditch.

Note: Only one dip net per person is permitted for the taking of smelt and suckers. Such dip net must be attended at all times while in use and such nets shall only be raised and lowered vertically when fishing. No seine or dip net may be left unattended within 25 feet of the edge of the water.

## **BOUNDARY WATERS**

### **Wisconsin-Iowa and Wisconsin-Minnesota**

Minnow Seines: Minnow seines may be used all year and shall not exceed 50 feet in length and 8 feet in width. The mesh shall not exceed one-half inch stretch measure.

Minnow Dip Nets: Minnow dip nets may be used all year for taking, catching or killing minnows. A minnow dip net is a piece of netting suspended from a rounded or square frame not exceeding 8 feet in diameter or 8 feet square and making a bag when lifted not more than 4 feet deep. It shall be unlawful to use dip nets in any manner other than raising and lowering vertically when fishing.

Minnow Traps: Minnow trap construction and the name and address requirements are the same as the inland regulations, however traps must be raised and the minnows removed at least once a day between one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset. Minnow traps may be used all year.

Cast Nets: Minnow cast nets shall not exceed 7 feet in diameter or mesh of not more than one-half inch stretch measure. Cast nets may be used all year.

Crayfish Scoops: Crayfish scoops may be used all year to harvest crayfish, minnows and dragonfly larvae only and are defined as a metal frame covered with hardware cloth not to exceed 4 feet in length, 2 feet in width and 18 inches in depth. A handle of any length may be attached.

**Wisconsin-Michigan - Wisconsin Inland Water Regulations apply.**

## **MINNOWS**

**No person may sell, trade or barter minnows taken from Wisconsin-Michigan boundary waters. No person may take fish other than smelt with nets or traps in the Montreal River downstream.**

## **OTHER SPECIES**

**Dip nets: Dip nets may be used for taking suckers, redhorse, carp, smelt and lawyers or burbot from April 1 to May 14, in the Menominee river except that portion from the upstream side of the Hattie Street Bridge in Marinette-Menominee river upstream to the next dam and within 2000 feet below dams on the Menominee river.**

**Seines and minnow traps: The use of seines and minnow traps is not allowed on the Wisconsin-Michigan boundary waters.**

## **29.509 BAIT DEALER LICENSE.**

**(1)** In this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

(a) "Bait" means any species of frog, crayfish or minnow used for fishing purposes.

(b) "Bait dealer, Class A" means any person who buys for resale, barter, gives or sells bait to the amount of \$2,000 or more each year.

(c) "Bait dealer, Class B" means any person who buys or gives for resale, barter, or sells bait to the amount of less than \$2,000 each year.

**(2)** A bait dealer license may be issued by the department to any resident.

**(3)** No person may engage in the business of bait dealer unless the person is issued a bait dealer license by the department, except that a child under 16 years of age who is a resident may barter or sell bait to consumers without a license or permit and shall be allowed to have a possession limit of 5,000 of each species of bait, but the child may not make bait sales totaling more than \$500 annually.

**(4)** Each licensee shall keep records as required by the department of all transactions in the production, buying and selling of bait carried on by the licensee, except that retail sales to consumers need not be recorded. This record shall show the name and address of the person from whom bait was purchased and to whom it was sold, together with the date of each transaction and the value of the bait. This record shall be open to the inspection of the department at all reasonable hours. The record shall be kept intact for a period of 2 years after the expiration of any license issued under this section, as to all transactions carried on while the license was effective.

**(5)** The department may issue permits for the taking of bait from specified waters and restrict the number of permits that may be issued for any designated body of water. The permits shall be issued in the order of application up to the limit established by the department.

**(6)** This section does not apply to bait produced in a state or municipal fish hatchery or to bait that is farm-raised fish.

**(7)** Any person who molests, damages, destroys or takes the bait traps of another, regardless of intent, shall forfeit not more than \$100.

## **BAIT DEALER LICENSE FEES.**

(a) RESIDENT BAIT DEALER, CLASS A. The fee for a Class A bait dealer license is \$50.

(b) RESIDENT BAIT DEALER, CLASS B. The fee for a Class B bait dealer license is \$10.